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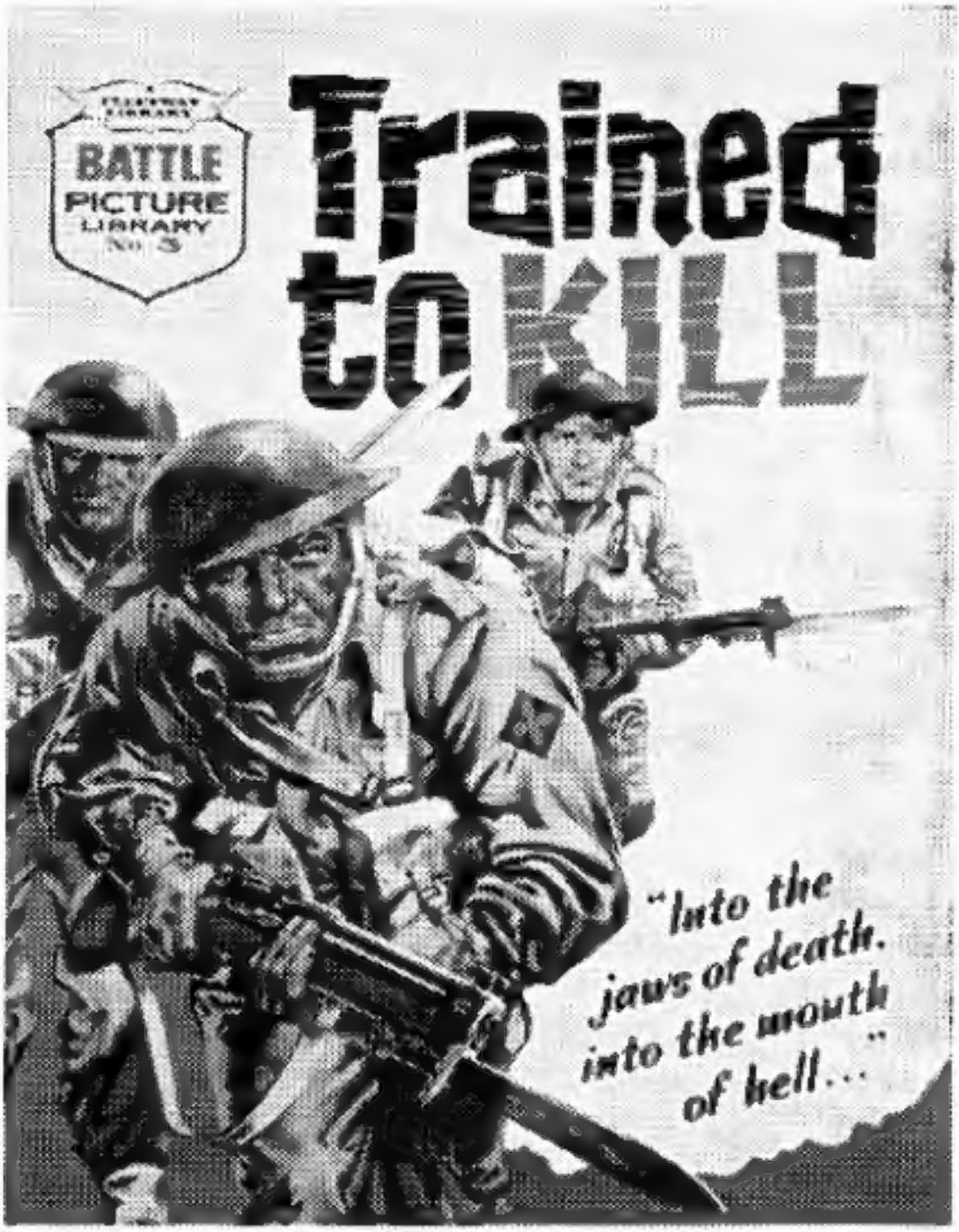

TWO Dramatic, All-action Issues Every Month

Break-Through

JANUARY, 1943. A GRIM BATTLE WAS RAGING THROUGH THE BLEAK MOUNTAINS OF TUNISIA AS THE FIRST ARMY STROVE TO DISLODGE THE GERMANS FROM THEIR DIMINISHING FOOTHOLD IN AFRICA. THE 10TH BRETSHIRE REGIMENT, IN PARTICULAR, WAS HAVING A GRUELLING TIME, UNDER HEAVY SHELLFIRE AND CONTINUOUS LOCAL GERMAN ATTACKS...

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Chapter 1. LAST OFFENSIVE

THE POLICEMEN EYED THE TWO PRIVATES WITH DISTASTE.
"SCRUFFY MOB YOU MUST COME FROM! YOUR CAP BADGES ARE DIRTY, AND YOU CAN'T HAVE SHINED YOUR BOOTS FOR MONTHS!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? WE'VE JUST COME OUT OF THE LINE!
WE'RE FIGHTING MEN. WE HAVEN'T GOT SOFT, BOMB-PROOF JOBS LIKE YOU REDCAPS!

THE SERGEANT BRISTLED ANGRILY...
THAT'LL BE ALL THE LIP FROM YOU! LET'S HAVE YOUR NAMES AND NUMBERS!

THEN THE N.C.O. MADE A BAD MISTAKE...
TENTH BRETSHIRES, EH? WELL, THEY NEVER WERE A SOLDIERLY OUTFIT!

NEXT MOMENT A HARD FIST TOOK HIM ON THE POINT OF THE CHIN...
YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT US... BUT NOBODY INSULTS OUR REGIMENT!

WHISTLES SHRILLED, AND POLICE REINFORCEMENTS CAME AT THE RUN. IN NO TIME A SAVAGE FREE-FOR-ALL WAS RAGING IN THE MARKET SQUARE. IT TOOK SIX BURLY POLICEMEN TO SUBDUE THE OUTRAGED INFANTRYMEN.
U-UGHH!

THE UPSHOT WAS INEVITABLE... ARREST, COURT-MARTIAL, AND CONVICTION ...
... AND THE SENTENCE OF THIS COURT IS THAT YOU EACH BE AWARDED SIXTY DAYS' DETENTION.

THE DETENTION CAMP WAS HIGH IN THE HILLS, AT SIDI GABR, ONE OF THE COLDEST SPOTS IN NORTH AFRICA IN THE WINTER. IT WAS THERE RUSTY AND BUTCH FIRST MET CORPORAL GRIMSHAW, THE POLICEMAN WHO WAS PHYSICAL TRAINING INSTRUCTOR FOR THE CAMP.
UP, UP, UP, UP! HIGHER, HIGHER, HIGHER! COME ON... YOU BROKE YOUR MOTHER'S HEART, BUT YOU WON'T BREAK MINE!

THE CORPORAL WAS IRON-HARD HIMSELF, AND HE SAW NO REASON WHY EVERYONE SHOULD NOT BE THE SAME...
WHAT IS HE TRYING TO DO? KILL US?
IF WE DON'T DIE OF EXHAUSTION WE'LL PEG OUT WITH PNEUMONIA!
... AND I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MOANS ABOUT BEING COLD! BY THE TIME I'VE FINISHED WITH YOU, YOU'LL BE SWEATING!
IF EVER I MEET UP WITH THIS BLOKE AGAIN...

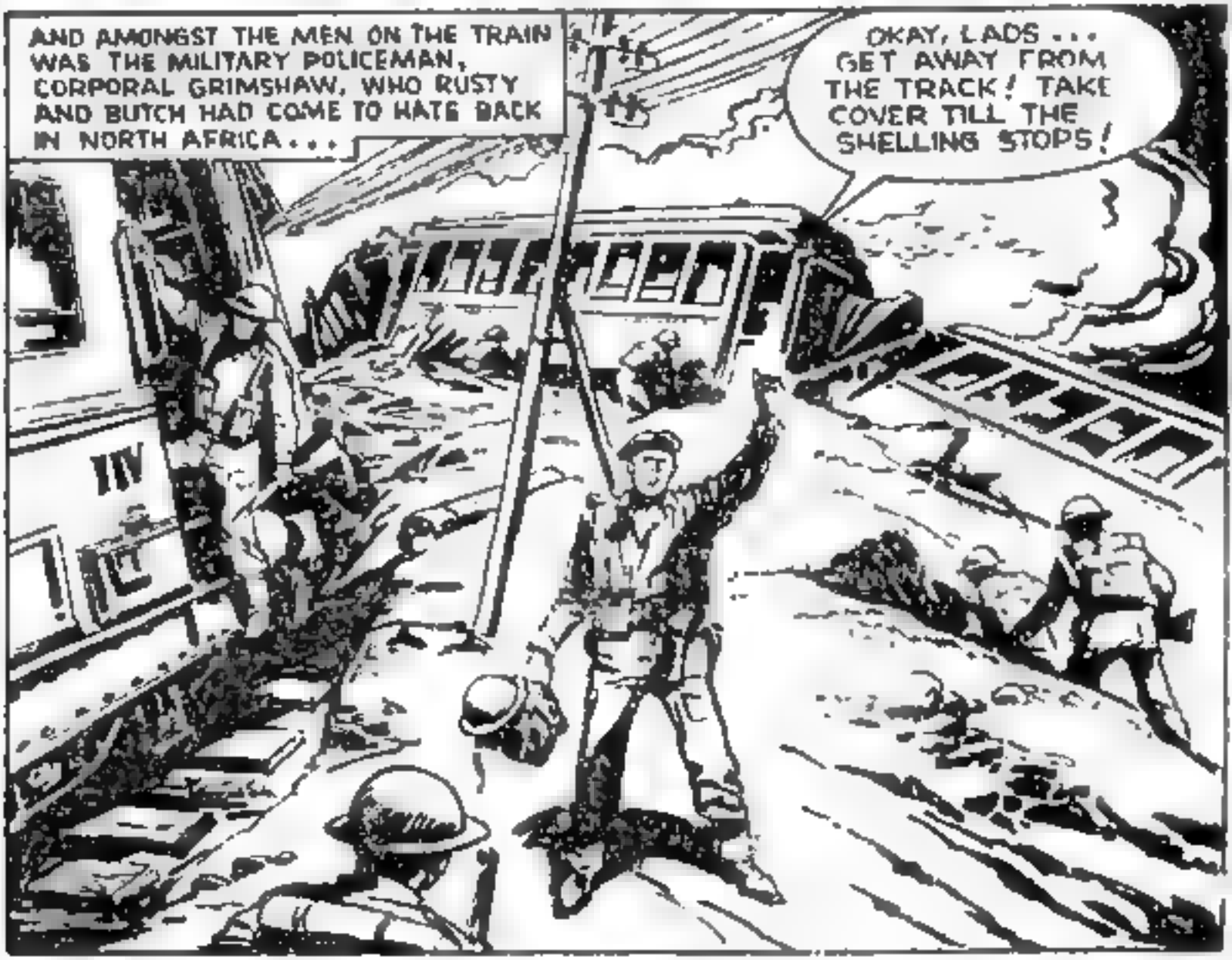
WHEN THEY HAD SERVED THEIR SIXTY DAYS DETENTION, RUSTY AND BUTCH REJOINED THEIR UNIT TO TAKE PART IN THE LAST BIG OFFENSIVE THAT CLEARED TUNISIA AND THREW THE GERMANS OUT OF AFRICA...

AFTER TUNISIA CAME THE INVASION OF SICILY, AND THEN THE ITALIAN MAINLAND, WHERE, AFTER MONTHS OF SAVAGE FIGHTING THE GERMANS EVENTUALLY BROUGHT THE ALLIES TO A HALT ALONG THE LINE OF THE *ORTUNA* RIVER...

THE GERMANS HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF THE GROUND, AND THEIR ARMY COMMAND MADE CERTAIN PLANS . . .
THERE IS A WEAK POINT HERE, WHERE THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN SECTORS MEET. WE WILL MAKE A SWIFT AND SECRET CONCENTRATION OF ARMOUR HERE WHILE WE FEINT AS THOUGH TO ATTACK THE CANADIANS ON THE EASTERN FLANK. THEN WE BREAK THROUGH TOWARDS CAMPAGNA, THE RAIL CENTRE AND FORWARD BASE.

AND IT WAS TO THE ADVANCE BASE OF CAMPAGNA THAT RUSTY AND BUTCH RETURNED AFTER A THREE WEEKS' COURSE IN ENEMY WEAPON HANDLING BACK AT CAMPEZZI. ALREADY THE GERMANS, TRYING TO SOFTEN UP BRITISH COMMUNICATIONS, WERE USING LONG RANGE GUNS TO SHELL THE TOWN . . .
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? THIS USED TO BE A QUIET TOWN!
THIS WILL SHAKE UP SOME OF THOSE BASE AND CHAIRBORNE TYPES!

ABOUT THIS TIME ANOTHER TROOP TRAIN, BRINGING DRAFTS AND VARIOUS DETAILS, WAS DERAILED BY SHELLING EIGHT MILES SOUTH OF CAMPAGNA...


AND AMONGST THE MEN ON THE TRAIN WAS THE MILITARY POLICEMAN, CORPORAL GRIMSHAW, WHO RUSTY AND BUTCH HAD COME TO HATE BACK IN NORTH AFRICA...
OKAY, LADS... GET AWAY FROM THE TRACK! TAKE COVER TILL THE SHELLING STOPS!
IIV

GRIMSHAW'S ORDERS WERE TO GET TO CAMPAGNA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SO WHILE THE OTHERS WAITED FOR LORRIES OR FOR THE LINE TO BE REPAIRED, THE HARD-BITTEN CORPORAL STARTED OUT FOR CAMPAGNA ON FOOT...

NO USE WAITING THERE BUT IF I WAS IN CHARGE OF 'EM... WHICH I'M NOT.. I'D HAVE 'EM ON THE MOVE REAL SMARTISH! NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULDN'T MARCH THE REST OF THE WAY.

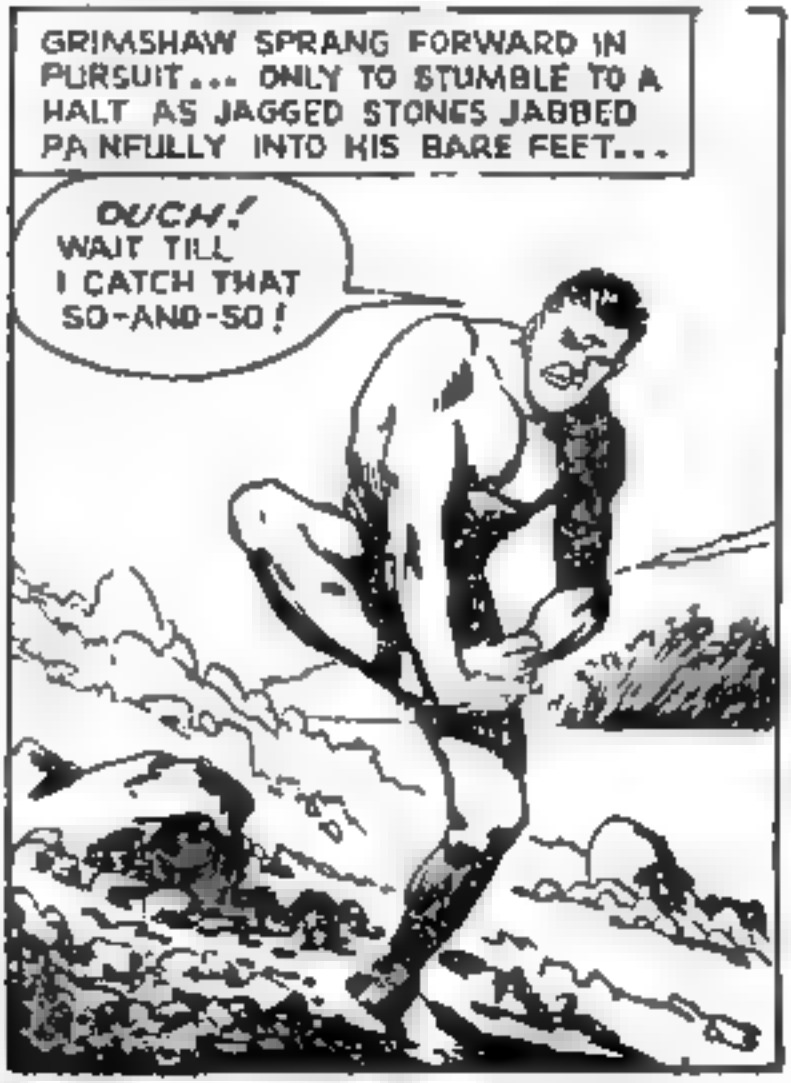
THE DAY WAS HOT, AND AN HOUR'S MARCH FOUND GRIMSHAW SOAKED IN SWEAT AND WITH A MASK OF DUST ON HIS CRAGGY FACE. HE CAME TO A RIVER AND THE COOL WATER LOOKED SO INVITING HE UNPACKED THE BATHING TRUNKS FROM HIS PACK.

THIS'LL FRESHEN ME UP...

BUT THAT PLEASANT SPOT HAD ALREADY BEEN CHOSEN AS A RESTING PLACE BY A MAN HIDING IN THE BUSHES A LITTLE WAY ALONG THE BANK CAPLESS, DIRTY AND UNSHAVEN, PRIVATE SCRUTTON WAS A DESERTER AND EX-CONVICT. HE WATCHED THE CORPORAL DIVE INTO THE WATER AND DARTED TO WHERE THE SWIMMER'S UNIFORM WAS LYING ON THE BANK.

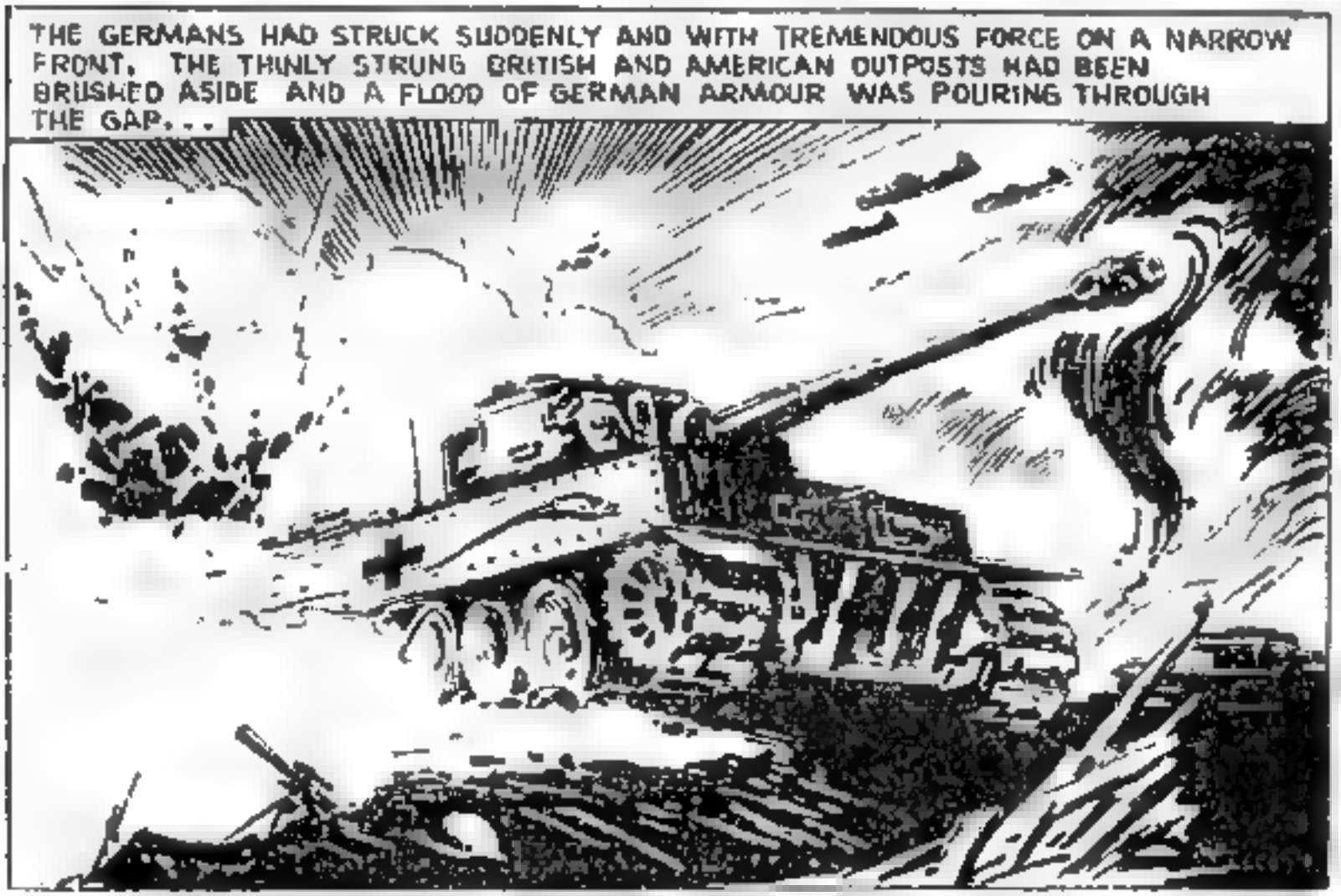
A FLIPPIN' REDCAP CORPORAL! JUST WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR. AS A REDCAP, I'LL BE ABLE TO BLUFF MY WAY ANYWHERE.

TEN MINUTES LATER, WHEN GRIMSHAW CAME OUT OF THE WATER, HE WAS JUST IN TIME TO SEE A MAN RUNNING OFF, DRESSED IN HIS UNIFORM...
HEY! WHAT THE HECK!

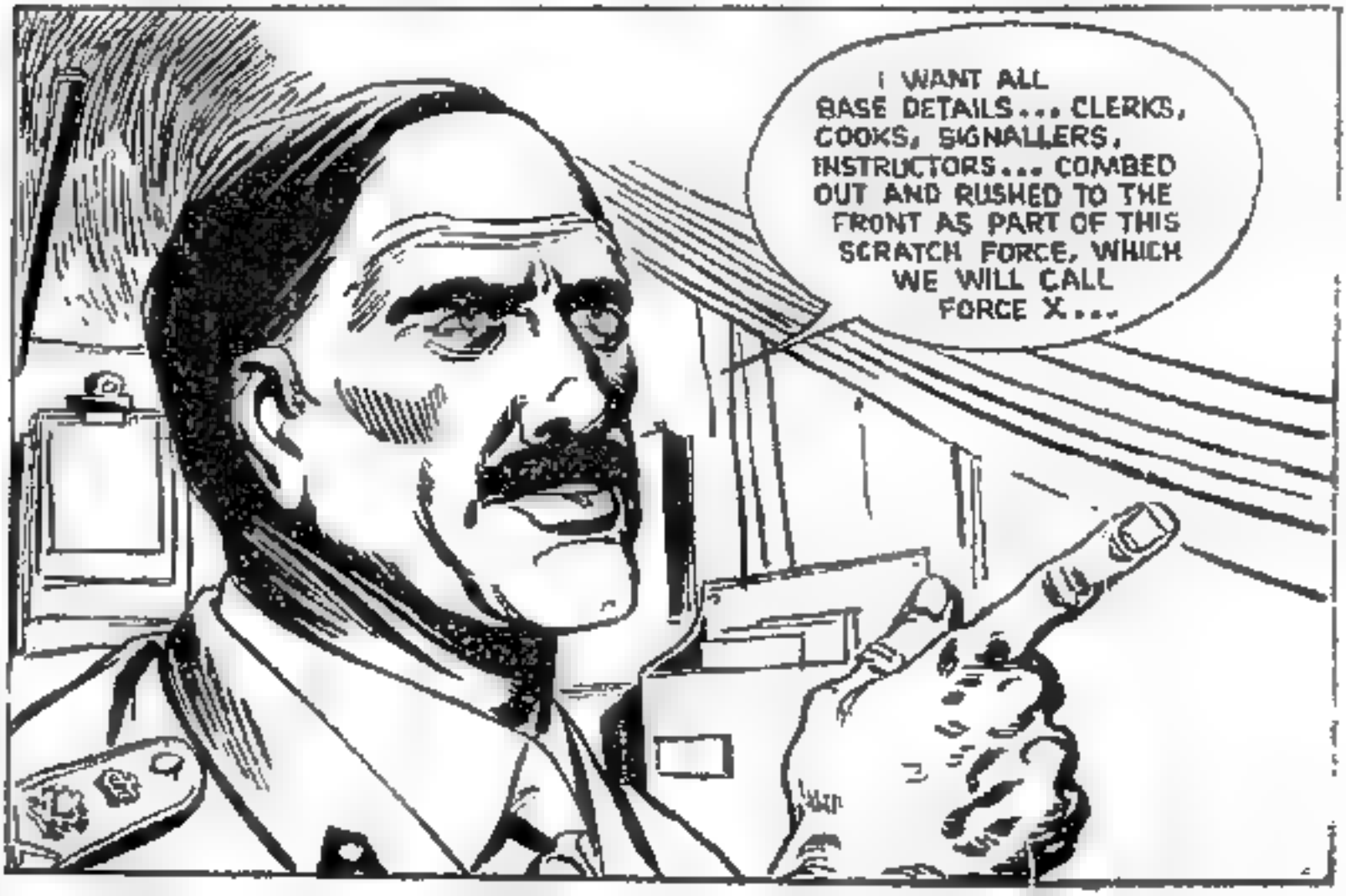

GRIMSHAW SPRANG FORWARD IN PURSUIT... ONLY TO STUMBLE TO A HALT AS JAGGED STONES JABBED PAINFULLY INTO HIS BARE FEET...
OUCH! WAIT TILL I CATCH THAT SO-AND-SO!

KNOWING PURSUIT WAS HOPELESS, THE CORPORAL RETURNED TO THE UNTIDY PILE OF CLOTHES THAT DID NOT BELONG TO HIM.
A PRIVATE IN THE WEST STANFORDS! WELL, I CAN'T WALK INTO CAMPAGNA IN MY TRUNKS SO I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO PUT ON THIS SCRUFFY UNIFORM. BUT I PITY THAT BLOKE WHEN I CATCH UP WITH HIM!

DARKNESS HAD FALLEN BY THE TIME GRIMSHAW RESUMED HIS WEARY HIKE TOWARDS CAMPAGNA, AND MILES UP IN FRONT THE THUNDERING GUNS FLAMED IN FURY ACROSS THE NIGHT SKY...
HE MIGHT HAVE LEFT ME MY OWN BOOTS! THESE ARE KILLING ME!


THE GERMANS HAD STRUCK SUDDENLY AND WITH TREMENDOUS FORCE ON A NARROW FRONT. THE THINLY STRUNG BRITISH AND AMERICAN OUTPOSTS HAD BEEN BRUSHED ASIDE AND A FLOOD OF GERMAN ARMOUR WAS POURING THROUGH THE GAP...

HURRIEDLY, THE BRITISH CORPS COMMANDER GAVE ORDERS FOR THE GAP TO BE PLUGGED ...
THIS IS THE SORT OF ATTACK ROMMEL TRIED IN LIBYA... MORE LIKE A BIG RAID TO DISRUPT COMMUNICATIONS. AS LONG AS WE HOLD THE HIGH GROUND ON EITHER SIDE OF HIS ADVANCE, WE HAVE HIM! THE WEAK SPOT IS THE TAGLIONE RIDGE, AND WE MUST SCRAPE TOGETHER A SCRATCH FORCE TO HOLD IT!


I WANT ALL BASE DETAILS... CLERKS, COOKS, SIGNALLERS, INSTRUCTORS... COMBED OUT AND RUSHED TO THE FRONT AS PART OF THIS SCRATCH FORCE, WHICH WE WILL CALL FORCE X...

IN CAMPAGNA, EVERY AVAILABLE MILITARY POLICEMAN WAS SENT INTO THE STREETS TO RAKE IN MEN...
GOING ON LEAVE? DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT, CHUM! YOU'RE GOING BACK UP THE LINE... TONIGHT!

STILL FUMING AT THE TRICK THAT HAD BEEN PLAYED ON HIM, CORPORAL GRIMSHAW ARRIVED IN CAMPAGNA THAT EVENING. A FEW YARDS INSIDE THE TOWN'S BOUNDARIES, HE WAS STOPPED...
OKAY, YOU SCRUFFY-LOOKING EXCUSE FOR A SOLDIER! REPORT TO THE SERGEANT DOWN BY THOSE LORRIES AT THE END OF THE STREET. EMERGENCY ORDERS... YOU'RE PART OF FORCE X.
LISTEN — I'M A MILITARY POLICEMAN, SAME AS YOU! MY NAME'S CORPORAL GRIMSHAW...

THE HARDBOILED M.P.S WERE NOT IMPRESSED AND ONE OF THEM PULLED THE PAYBOOK OUT OF THE POCKET OF THE PROTESTING GRIMSHAW'S BATTLEDRESS...

SO YOU'RE AN M.P. ARE YOU? THIS PAYBOOK SAYS YOU'RE PRIVATE SCRUTTON OF THE WEST STANFORDS!

SCRUTTON? HEY, THAT'S THE BLOKE THAT'S WANTED FOR DESERTION, JIM!

I TELL YOU IT'S A MISTAKE! SOMEONE PINCHED MY UNIFORM AND LEFT ME HIS!

THE BURLY POLICEMEN STEPPED GRIMLY FORWARD AND BEGAN TO HUSTLE HIM TOWARDS THE A.P.M.'S OFFICE. IT WAS THE LAST INDIGNITY FOR GRIMSHAW AND WRENCHING LOOSE, HE SWUNG HIS FIST...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

IT WAS A GOOD FIGHT WHILE IT LASTED BUT NUMBERS DEFEATED GRIMSHAW AND HE WAS IGNOMINIOUSLY FROGMARCHED OFF TO THE A.P.M'S OFFICE...

THE OFFICER LISTENED COLDLY TO GRIMSHAW'S FANCIFUL-SOUNDING EXPLANATION...
I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT, SCRUTTON! YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONVICTED OF IMPERSONATING AN OFFICER, AND YOU CAN'T FOOL ME WITH THIS RIDICULOUS YARN! I SHOULD SEND YOU BACK TO BASE UNDER ARREST, BUT WHY SHOULD YOU GO BACK TO SAFETY WHILE BETTER MEN ARE RISKING THEIR LIVES? YOU'LL GO TO FORCE X!
MP

Chapter 2. FORCE X

RUSTY AND BUTCH, WHO HAD BEEN ROPED INTO FORCE X AND WERE WAITING STOICALLY TO GO UP THE LINE, LOOKED OUT OF THE BACK OF THEIR LORRY IN DISBELIEF.

WHEN HE REACHED THE LORRY GRIMSHAW, WHO HAD A POOR MEMORY FOR NAMES BUT A LONG ONE FOR FACES, RECOGNISED RUSTY AND BUTCH AS TWO EX-INMATES OF THE SIDI GABR DETENTION CAMP. DESPERATELY HE APPEALED TO THEM...

IT WAS A CHANCE THE TWO PRIVATES OF THE BRETSHIRES COULD NOT MISS. THEY HAD NEVER HAD ANY TIME FOR M P S — AND ESPECIALLY NOT FOR CORPORAL GRIMSHAW! NOW THEY HAD HIM JUST WHERE THEY WANTED HIM!

BUTCH, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN HIM BEFORE? DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A REDCAP TO ME!

YOU CAN TELL WHAT HE IS BY THE LOOK OF HIM — A FLIPPIN' SCRIMSHANKER AND SCRUFFY NO-GOOD. HE'S GOT VERTICAL WIND-UP AT THE VERY THOUGHT OF GOING UP IN THE LINE.

GRIMSHAW, SPEECHLESS WITH FURY, WAS BUNDLED INTO THE LORRY, AND A FEW MINUTES LATER, THEY WERE JOLTING AND CLATTERING TOWARDS THE MOUNTAIN BATTLEGROUND WHERE GUNS AND BOMBS WERE RENDING THE NIGHT INTO SHIMMERING FLAME...

GRIMSHAW, NOT YET RESIGNED TO MAKING THE BEST OUT OF A BAD JOB, WHIRLED SAVAGELY ON RUSTY AND BUTCH...
YOU RATS! I'LL FIX YOU TWO FOR THIS IF IT'S THE LAST THING I EVER DO!
GARN! TIME YOU REDCAPS SAW A BIT OF FIGHTING. INSTEAD OF SPENDING YOUR TIME LUMBERING INNOCENT BLOKES LIKE US!

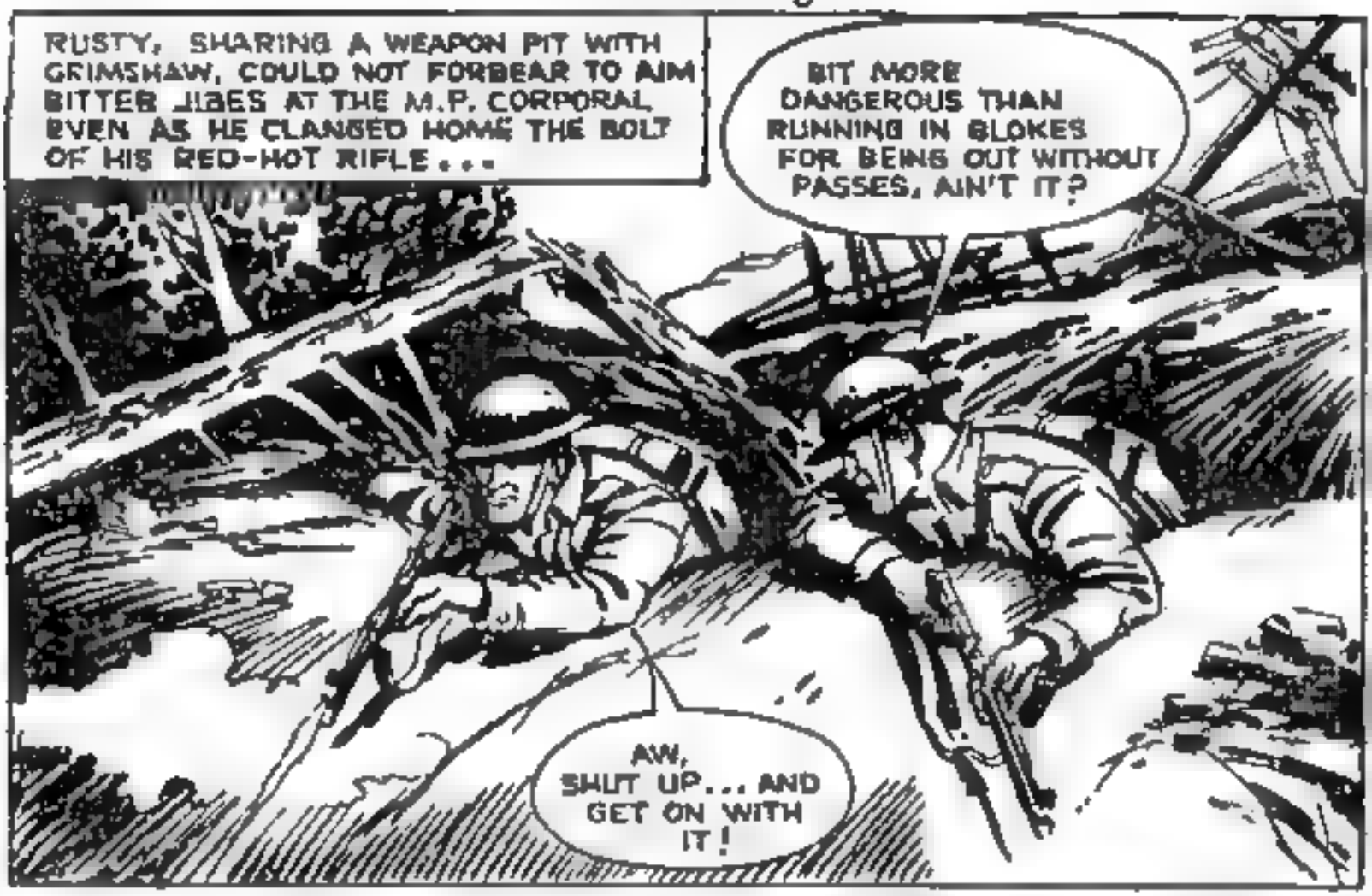
THE LORRIES GROUND ON AND ON, TILL THE OMINOUS THUMP OF BATTERIES FIRING INDEPENDENTLY MINGLED WITH THE CRASH OF SHELLS AND THE DISTANT ANGRY STUTTER OF MACHINE-GUNS.
HURRY IT UP, THERE! FALL IN ON THE ROAD!

THE OFFICER WHO HAD BEEN STATIONED TO DIRECT REINFORCEMENTS UP TO THE FIRING LINE AT THIS POINT HAD JUST BEEN FELLED BY THE SAVAGE BLAST OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE.
THE LIEUTENANT'S BEEN 'IT! BUT YOU DON'T WANT ANY SIGNPOSTS TO SHOW YOU THE WAY TO THE WAR, DO YOU?

WITHIN MOMENTS, THE REINFORCEMENTS FOUND THEMSELVES UNDER FIRE, FOR THE ENEMY WERE SHELLING THE APPROACHES TO THE VITAL TAGLIONE RIDGE...

RUSTY, BLITCH AND GRIMSHAW WERE AMONGST THE FIRST TO REACH THE TOP OF THE RIDGE, WHERE THEY REPORTED TO THE NEAREST OFFICER THEY SAW.
WE'RE FROM FORCE X, SIR!
GOOD! THE ORDERS ARE SIMPLE. FIND YOURSELVES COVER, AND WHEN THE JERRIES COME ... GIVE 'EM BLAZES!

TEN MINUTES LATER THE ENEMY PUT IN HIS HEAVIEST AND MOST DETERMINED ATTACK OF THE NIGHT ...


RUSTY, SHARING A WEAPON PIT WITH GRIMSHAW, COULD NOT FORBEAR TO AIM BITTER JIBES AT THE M.P. CORPORAL EVEN AS HE CLANGED HOME THE BOLT OF HIS RED-HOT RIFLE...
BIT MORE DANGEROUS THAN RUNNING IN BLOKES FOR BEING OUT WITHOUT PASSES, AIN'T IT?
AW, SHUT UP... AND GET ON WITH IT!

ONCE AGAIN THE GERMANS REELED BACK, UNABLE TO GAIN THE SUMMIT IN FACE OF THE STORM OF FIRE FROM THE DOGGED AND DESPERATE DEFENDERS...
AND FOR THE TIME BEING, THE TAGLIONE RIDGE REMAINED IN BRITISH HANDS.

BUT THE GERMANS HAD NOT DONE WITH THE TERRIBLE RIDGE YET, AND SOON AFTER DAWN GENERAL SCHAEFFER WAS MAKING FRESH PLANS.
THE ENGLANDERS ON TAGLIONE RIDGE ARE STUBBORN FIGHTERS, SO INSTEAD OF TRYING TO TAKE IT BY COSTLY FRONTAL ASSAULT I PROPOSE TO SEND A SMALL ARMOURED COLUMN UP THE CAMPEZZI VALLEY, AND ANOTHER UP THE MONTFALCONE ROAD. THEY WILL ISOLATE THE RIDGE, AND TAKE IT FROM THE REAR.

IN THE MEANTIME, ON THE VECCHIA ROAD SOUTH OF CAMPAGNA, THE DESERTER, SCRUTTON, IN HIS MASQUERADE AS A CORPORAL OF MILITARY POLICE, HAD FOUND HIMSELF A JOB DIRECTING TRAFFIC.
IF I CAN FIND A LORRY GOING TO NAPLES I'LL BLUFF MY WAY INTO GETTING A LIFT. AND ONCE IN NAPLES, THEY'LL NEVER FIND ME!

BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR SCRUTTON, AMONGST THE REINFORCEMENTS BEING RUSHED UP THE LINE WAS A GROUP OF OFFICERS FROM THE WEST STANFORDS . . .
DRIVER . . . STOP THE JEEP! LOOK, TONY . . . THAT M.P. OVER THERE . . . T—IT'S SCRUTTON, THE CHAP WHO DESERTED, I'LL SWEAR IT!

THE JEEP SKIDDED TO A HALT AND AS THE OFFICERS MADE A MOVE TOWARDS HIM, SCRUTTON SUDDENLY RECOGNISED THEM. HE TURNED AS IF TO RUN FOR IT...
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, SCRUTTON!
OF ALL THE INFERNAL LUCK!

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, SCRUTTON WAS UNDER ARREST AND ON HIS WAY BACK TO CAMPAGNA...

AND IN THE MUCH BATTERED TOWN, THE DESERTER WAS TAKEN BEFORE THE ASSISTANT PROVOST MARSHAL WHO SOON REALISED HE HAD MADE A GRAVE MISTAKE...
WELL. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THAT CHAP WE SENT UP THE LINE WAS CORPORAL GRIMSHAW AFTER ALL!
WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THIS MAN, SIR?

SHOVE HIM IN THE CELLS FOR THE TIME BEING. AND IF THERE'S ANY WAY OF PACKING HIM OFF TO THE HOTTEST PART OF THE LINE, THAT'S WHERE WE'LL SEND HIM!

THAT DAY, THE GERMAN ARMOURED COLUMN BURST THROUGH IN SURPRISE ATTACKS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE TAGLIONE RIDGE. IN THE AIR, BITTER BATTLES RAGED AS R.A.F. FIGHTERS ATTACKED THE SUPPORTING ENEMY DIVE-BOMBERS.

THE THIN LINE OF DEFENDERS SUDDENLY FOUND THEMSELVES ATTACKED IN THE REAR... RELENTLESSLY, HEEDLESS OF THE BULLETS THAT SPLASHED HARMLESSLY AGAINST THEIR ARMOUR, THE MASSIVE STEEL MONSTERS GROUND THEIR WAY UP THE SLOPE OF THE RIDGE.
ENEMY TANKS! GET THAT PIAT INTO ACTION!

COURAGE WAS NOT ENOUGH. FLESH AND BLOOD COULD NOT WITHSTAND STEEL AND SHELLS, AND THE GERMAN ARMOUR OVERRAN THE MOST STUBBORN RESISTANCE.

BATTLE WEARY, MOST OF THEM WOUNDED, A MERE HANDFUL OF BRITISH SURVIVORS WERE TAKEN PRISONER AND WERE HERDED THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES.
AND AMONGST THEM WERE GRIMSHAW RUSTY AND BUTCH.

THE WAY WAS CLEAR FOR THE GERMAN THRUST ON CAMPAGNA, AND SOON, THE MAIN BODY OF ENEMY ARMOUR WAS THUNDERING ON ITS WAY...

DESPITE ALLIED AIR ATTACKS AND A DESPERATE FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL, GERMAN TANKS WERE PROBING MENACINGLY INTO CAMPAGNA BY EVENING.

AMONGST THE LAST TO LEAVE THE DOOMED TOWN WERE THE MILITARY POLICE STAFF... TAKING THE DESERTER, SCRUTTON, WITH THEM. THE PRISONER SEIZED HIS OPPORTUNITY IN THE CONFUSION AND MADE A BREAK FOR IT... DASHING TOWARDS THE GERMAN-HELD SIDE OF CAMPAGNA.

LET THE YELLOW RAT GO, SERGEANT! I'VE GOT A FEELING HE'S GOING TO COME TO A STICKY END, ANYWAY!

WITH HANDS HELD HIGH, HE SURRENDERED WILLINGLY TO THE ONCOMING GERMANS AND WAS MARCHED TO THE REAR BY A CONTEMPTUOUS ENEMY SOLDIER.

MOVE... FASTER, COWARDLY ENGLANDER! IT IS A PITY ALL YOUR COMRADES ARE NOT SO EAGER TO GET OUT OF THE FIGHTING.

IF I PLAY MY CARDS RIGHT AND GET ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE JERRIES I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO A BIT OF GOOD FOR MYSELF!

MEANWHILE, IN ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, THE SITUATION WAS CONSIDERED TO BE SERIOUS, BUT NOT DESPERATE...
... AND THANKS TO THOSE GUYS OF YOURS HOLDING OUT FOR SO LONG ON THE TAGLIONE RIDGE, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO CONCENTRATE STRONG COMBAT FORCES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BREAK-THROUGH. TONIGHT WE'LL STRIKE!

AND THAT NIGHT, THE FLANKS OF THE GERMAN SALIENT WERE ENGULFED IN AN INFERNO OF BOMBS FROM SWARMS OF ALLIED AIRCRAFT, WHILE HUNDREDS OF GUNS POURED SHELLS INTO THE ENEMY POSITIONS. THEN THE ALLIED TANKS WENT IN, FOLLOWED BY LORRIED INFANTRY...

BUT THE ALLIED THRUST DID LITTLE MORE THAN RESTORE THE ORIGINAL POSITION, AND IN COMPOUNDS MILES BEHIND THE LINES THE GERMANS WERE ABLE TO COUNT THEIR PRISONERS BY THE HUNDREDS.
FANCY ENDING UP LIKE THIS AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH!
END OF THE PER SHIN' WAR FOR US!
MAYBE—MAYBE NOT. WE MIGHT GET A CHANCE OF...
SUDDENLY GRIMSHAW BROKE OFF... AND UTTERED A GROWL OF FURY...
HEY! THERE'S THE BLOKE THAT STOLE MY UNIFORM!

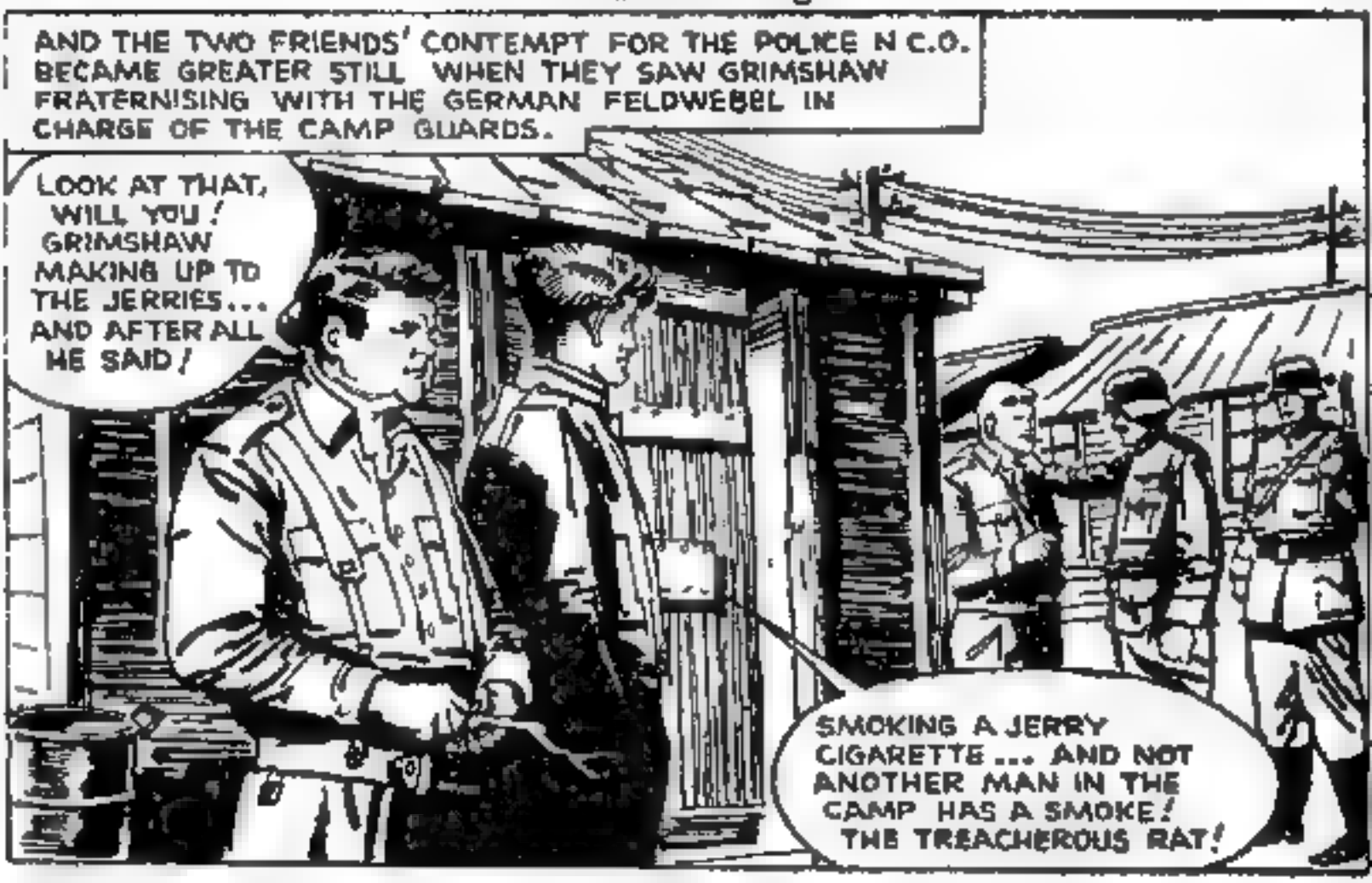
THE BURLY POLICEMAN FLUNG HIMSELF ACROSS THE COMPOUND AT THE DESERTER ...
MASQUERADE AS ME, WOULD YOU? GET ME INTO THIS MESS!
UGH... HELP!

AND IF THE GERMAN GUARD HAD NOT COME TO SCRUTTON'S RESCUE, HE WOULD SOON HAVE BEEN A HOSPITAL CASE...
I-I'LL GET EVEN WITH YOU!
SO THAT'S HOW GR.MSHAW GOT PUSHED INTO THE INFANTRY. NO WONDER HE WAS MAD!

LATER THAT DAY, RUSTY AND BUTCH HEARD GRIMSHAW TRYING TO PERSUADE OTHER PRISONERS TO MAKE PLANS TO ESCAPE...
NOW LISTEN, LADS... IT'S UP TO US TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO TRY TO ESCAPE. THAT IS ALWAYS THE DUTY OF A PRISONER OF WAR USE ANY TRICK OR DECEPTION, JUST SO LONG AS IT GIVES TROUBLE TO THE GERMANS!
HARK AT GRIMSHAW TALKING BIG! IF IT CAME TO IT, I BET HE WOULDN'T BE SO KEEN ON MAKING A BREAK FOR IT.
WELL, WE'LL SOON FIND OUT! I'VE GOT A SCHEME OF MY OWN, RUSTY, AND WE'LL ASK GRIMSHAW TO JOIN US. I BET YOU ANYTHING YOU LIKE HE BACKS OUT!

"WHEN BUTCH AND RUSTY GOT THE CORPORAL ON HIS OWN, BUTCH TOLD HIM WHAT WAS IN HIS MIND...
WHEN THE NEXT BATCH OF PRISONERS ARRIVE — THEY NEARLY ALWAYS GET HERE AFTER DARK — WE COULD MAKE A DASH FOR IT. I RECKON WE OUGHT TO HEAD FOR THE LITTLE VILLAGE IN THE VALLEY. THE EYTIES ARE ON OUR SIDE NOW...

GRIMSHAW SNORTED DERISIVELY...
THAT'S NO GOOD! YOU'D BE CUT DOWN BEFORE YOU MOVED TEN YARDS. NO, YOU'VE GOT TO USE YOUR LOAF IN THIS ESCAPING BUSINESS... IT NEEDS SOMETHING A BIT MORE CRAFTY TO GET BY THE JERRY GUARDS.
I KNEW IT! HE DOESN'T EVEN MEAN TO TRY TO ESCAPE!


AND THE TWO FRIENDS' CONTEMPT FOR THE POLICE N C.O. BECAME GREATER STILL WHEN THEY SAW GRIMSHAW FRATERNISING WITH THE GERMAN FELDWEBEL IN CHARGE OF THE CAMP GUARDS.
LOOK AT THAT, WILL YOU! GRIMSHAW MAKING UP TO THE JERRIES... AND AFTER ALL HE SAID!
SMOKING A JERRY CIGARETTE... AND NOT ANOTHER MAN IN THE CAMP HAS A SMOKE! THE TREACHEROUS RAT!

BUTCH WAS STILL DETERMINED ON HIS PLAN FOR ESCAPE, DESPITE GRIMSHAW'S OMINOUS WARNING. THE OPPORTUNITY CAME TWO NIGHTS LATER...
WAIT FOR IT, RUSTY... WAIT TILL I GIVE THE WORD!
CASUALLY, THEY LOUNGED NEAR THE GATEWAY AS IF CURIOUS TO SEE THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW BATCH OF

THERE WAS A BUSTLE ABOUT THE GATES AND BUTCH AND RUSTY EDGED FORWARD. A SENTRY SIGNALLED THE PARTY OF P.O.W'S IN... AND AT THAT MOMENT, THE ESCAPEES HURTLED INTO ACTION.

ACHTUNG! PRISONERS ESCAPE... AAAGH!

ONE GERMAN TRIED TO STOP RUSTY AND TOOK A HARD FIST UNDER THE CHIN. HE DROPPED AS THOUGH POLE-AXED.

THE UNEXPECTEDNESS OF THE SUDDEN BREAK TOOK THE GERMANS OFF GUARD. SCHMEISSER AUTOMATICS SENT A STREAM OF BULLETS QUESTING THROUGH THE NIGHT... BUT BY THEN RUSTY AND BUTCH HAD CROSSED THE BAND OF LIGHT AND WERE IN THE SHADOWS.

STUMBLING IN THE DARKNESS, BLUNDERING OVER DITCHES AND ACROSS FIELDS, THE TWO PANTING FUGITIVES MADE FOR THE VILLAGE WHERE THEY HOPED TO FIND SUCCOUR AT LAST THE WHITE WALLS OF THE BUILDINGS GLEAMED BEFORE THEM.

THE VILLAGE! LET'S HOPE WE'LL FIND SOMEONE WHO'LL HELP US.

IF WE DON'T... WE'VE HAD IT!

THEY KNOCKED URGENTLY AT THE FIRST HOUSE THEY CAME TO. AN OLD MAN OPENED THE DOOR AND HIS JAW DROPPED IN STARTLED DISMAY WHEN HE SAW WHO THEY WERE. BUT AFTER A MOMENT'S HESITATION, HE GESTURED FOR THEM TO ENTER.

INGLESI SOLDIERS! COME IN... QUICKLY!

GRATEFULLY THE TWO ENGLISHMEN SLIPPED INTO THE HOUSE AND THE OLD MAN NERVOUSLY CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND THEM.

THE MOMENT THEY WERE INSIDE, HE CALLED OUT AND A YOUNG MAN CAME INTO THE ROOM. HE WAS GUILLO, A SON WHO HAD LIVED IN AMERICA AND SPOKE ENGLISH. HE QUESTIONED BUTCH AND RUSTY, THEN HAD AN EXCITED CONVERSATION WITH HIS FATHER. FINALLY...

MY FATHER SAYS HE'LL FIND YOU TWO GUYS CLOTHES. THEN TOMORROW WE'LL TAKE YOU WITH US TO MARKET IN AMRUZZI. AFTER THAT, IT'S UP TO YOU.

DRESSED AS ITALIAN PEASANTS AND AFTER A MEAL, BUTCH AND RUSTY REFUSED TO STAY IN THE HOUSE OR ACCEPT ANY MORE HELP.

YOU HAVE DONE ENOUGH FOR US AND WE DON'T WANT YOU TO RUN ANY MORE RISKS. IF THE GERMANS FOUND US HERE THEY WOULD SHOOT YOU, SO WE WILL HIDE WHERE NO ONE LIVES.

GRATEFUL FAREWELLS WERE SAID AND THEY SLIPPED OUT OF THE HOUSE. SOME DISTANCE AWAY, THEY CAME TO A LARGE WAREHOUSE AND DECIDED IT WOULD MAKE A GOOD HIDING-PLACE.

BUT, BEFORE DAWN, THE GERMANS THREW A CORDON AROUND THE VILLAGE AND BEGAN AN EXHAUSTIVE HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCH.

IT WAS THE TRAMP OF JACKBOOTS IN THE STREET OUTSIDE THAT AWAKENED RUSTY. HIS HEART MISSED A BEAT AS HE LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND HE SHOOK BUTCH URGENTLY FROM HIS SLEEP.
QUICK! THE JERRIES ARE HERE! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT!

BUT EVEN AS THEY STARTED DOWN THE RICKETY STAIRS, HEAVY BOOTS CLATTERED BELOW. THE WHITE BEAM OF A TORCH OUTLINED THE BURLY FIGURES OF ARMED S.S. MEN...
BACK, BUTCH! OUT ON TO THE ROOF... IT'S THE ONLY WAY!

PANTING, THEY RETREATED TO THE ROOF. BUT AS THEY SCRAMBLED OVER THE TILES, THEY SUDDENLY FOUND THEMSELVES FACED BY A GERMAN WHO HAD CLIMBED ON TO THE ROOF FROM THE OUTSIDE STAIRWAY. IN THE GREY LIGHT OF DAWN HIS LUGER GLINTED MENACINGLY.
HALT!

RUSTY FLUNG HIMSELF DESPAIRINGLY SIDEWAYS, SNATCHED UP A HEAVY, LOOSE TILE AND FLUNG IT WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH.
AAGH!

THE S S. MAN TOPPLED FROM THE ROOF-TOP AND CRASHED TO THE GROUND MANY FEET BELOW MOMENTS LATER, THE WAREHOUSE WAS SURROUNDED. WITH BULLETS SMASHING INTO THE ROOF ALL AROUND THEM, THE TWO ESCAPEES REALISED THE HOPELESSNESS OF THEIR POSITION, AND RAISED THEIR ARMS...

THERE WAS LITTLE MERCY IN THE GERMANS' EYES AS THEY MARCHED THE TWO MEN OFF...
SOMEONE MUST HAVE BETRAYED US! HOW ELSE DID THE JERRIES KNOW WE WERE IN THE VILLAGE?
THE ONLY OTHER MAN WHO KNEW OUR PLAN WAS GRIMSHAW! AND HE'S PALLY WITH THE GERMANS... I TOLD YOU... NEVER TRUST A REDCAP!

THE TWO ESCAPEES WERE TAKEN TO THE H.Q. TOWN OF PAVIA AND LOCKED IN A CELL IN THE CIVILIAN JAIL. NEXT DAY THEY WERE TRIED AS SPIES AND FRANC-TIREURS, AND WITHIN A MATTER OF MINUTES THEY WERE CONVICTED.
YOU WERE IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, AND YOU KILLED A SOLDIER OF THE REICH! FOR THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE PUNISHMENT...

IN THREE DAYS' TIME YOU WILL BE TAKEN TO A PLACE OF EXECUTION AND THERE SHOT!

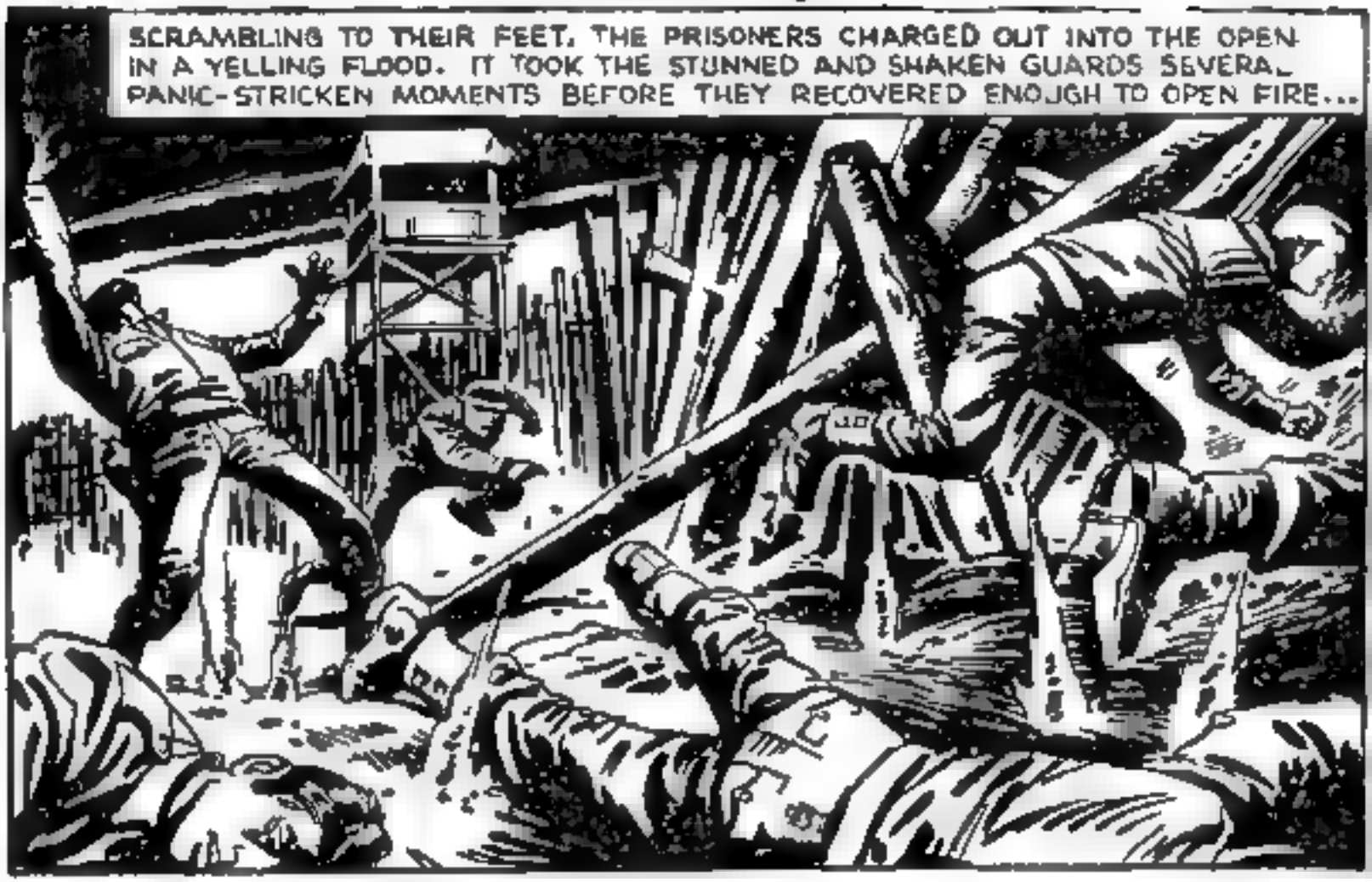
BACK IN THEIR CELL, RUSTY AND BUTCH BEMOANED THEIR FATE...
WHAT A ROTTEN WAY TO DIE! WE WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF IF WE'D CAUGHT A PACKET ON THE TAGLIONE RIDGE.
AND WE OWE IT ALL TO GRIMSHAW... THE RAT!

MEANWHILE, THE GERMANS HAD DECIDED TO MAKE THE FATE OF THE TWO ESCAPEES A WARNING TO OTHER PRISONERS.
..AND HAVE THE COURT'S VERDICT READ OUT IN ALL PRISON COMPOUNDS IN THIS ARMY AREA.
JAWOHL, HERR GENERAL!

ONE OF THE FIRST CAMPS TO GET THIS GRIM WARNING WAS THE PAVIO CAMP, FROM WHICH THE TWO CONDEMNED MEN HAD ESCAPED.
THE SENTENCE WILL BE CARRIED OUT AT 0-SIX HUNDRED HOURS ON THE MORNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST, WHEN PRIVATES CONDON AND BARLOW WILL BE TAKEN TO THE QUARRY AT CASTELFRANCO AND THERE SHOT. ALL PRISONERS ARE HEREBY WARNED THAT SIMILAR PUNISHMENT WILL BE METED OUT TO ANYONE USING CIVILIAN CLOTHING IN AN EFFORT TO ESCAPE!

Chapter 3. PLACE OF EXECUTION

THEN ONE BOMB OVERSHOT ITS TARGET AND BURST AT THE CORNER OF THE COMPOUND WITH A TREMENDOUS CRASH. IT GOUGED A GREAT CRATER IN THE EARTH AND BLEW A YAWNING GAP IN THE WALL...
BEFORE THE REVERBERATIONS OF THE EXPLOSIONS HAD DIED AWAY, GRIMSHAW SAW WHAT A PRICELESS CHANCE THIS OFFERED...
COME ON, LADS! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?


SCRAMBLING TO THEIR FEET, THE PRISONERS CHARGED OUT INTO THE OPEN IN A YELLING FLOOD. IT TOOK THE STUNNED AND SHAKEN GUARDS SEVERAL PANIC-STRICKEN MOMENTS BEFORE THEY RECOVERED ENOUGH TO OPEN FIRE...

ONLY ONE PRISONER REFUSED THE CHANCE – AND THE RISK – OF ATTEMPTED ESCAPE. THE DESERTER, SCRUTTON, COWERED IN FRIGHT IN A CORNER OF THE COMPOUND...
KAMERAD! KAMERAD! DON'T SHOOT! I'M NOT TRYING TO ESCAPE!

MEANWHILE, THE FUGITIVES WERE INSTINCTIVELY SCATTERING, KNOWING THAT BIG BANDS OF MEN COULD NOT REMAIN HIDDEN FROM THE GERMANS FOR LONG. THE TOUGH ATHLETE, GRIMSHAW, SOON OUTSTRIPPED THE OTHERS AND HEADED SOUTH TOWARDS THE ALLIED LINES..

WHAT A BREAK! I'LL TRAVEL ONLY AT NIGHT AND HIDE UP BY DAY. ONE MAN SHOULD BE ABLE TO DODGE JERRY PATROLS WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE.

BUT EVEN AS HE CLIMBED QUICKLY AND SKILFULLY UP INTO THE HILLS, ONE THOUGHT NAGGED REPEATEDLY AT HIS MIND.

BUT THERE'S THOSE TWO POOR DEVILS THEY ARE GOING TO SHOOT TOMORROW! I CAN'T JUST TURN MY BACK ON THEM WITHOUT TRYING TO FREE THEM! I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HELP... BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY!

GRIMSHAW KNEW THAT BUTCH AND RUSTY WERE TO BE EXECUTED IN THE CASTELFRANCO QUARRY. FOR DAYS BACK IN THE COMPOUND, HE HAD BEEN SECRETLY STUDYING A MAP OF THE DISTRICT... A MAP WHICH HAD BEEN HIDDEN IN HIS BELT AND WHICH THE GERMANS HAD NOT FOUND.

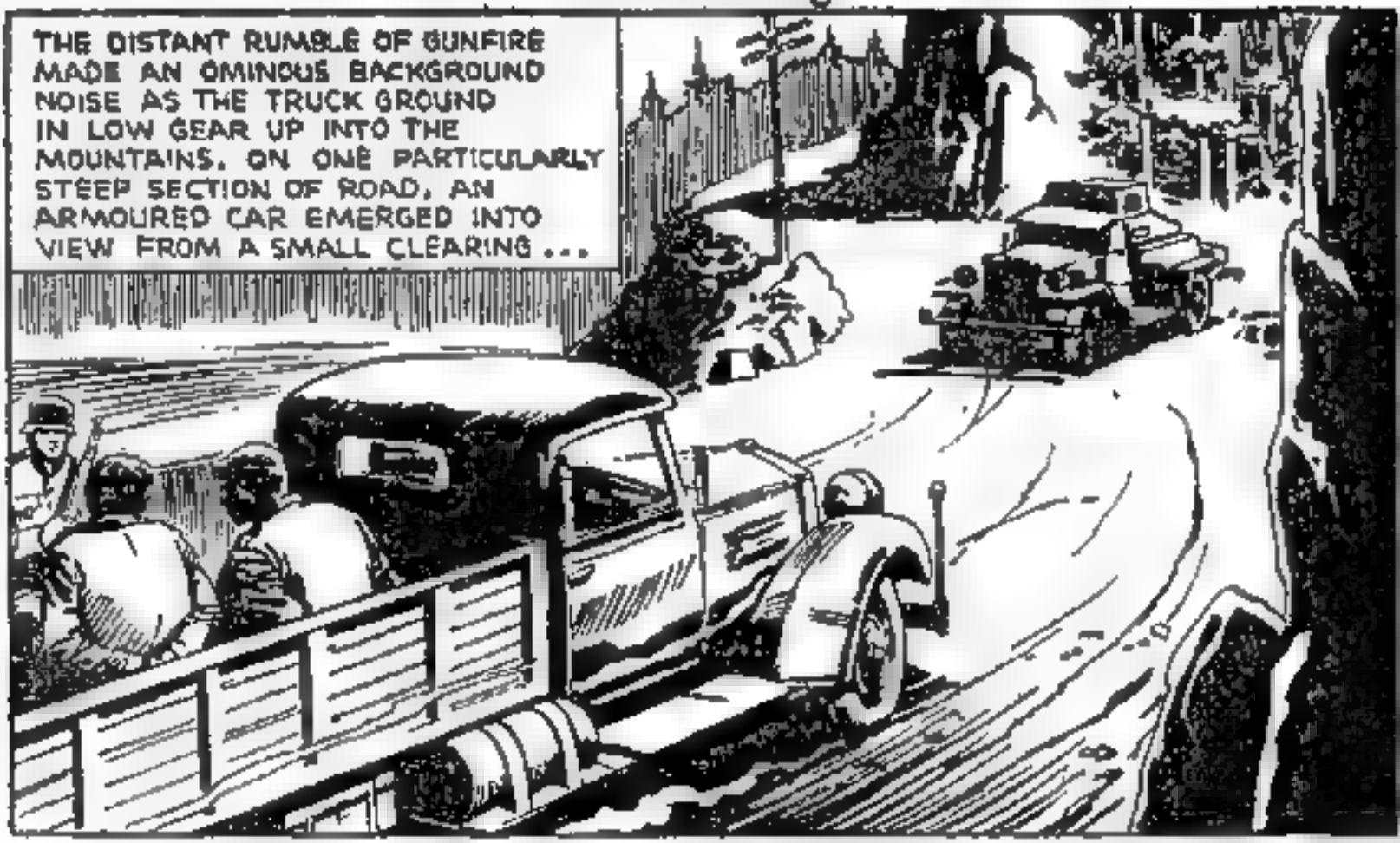
THE CASTELFRANCO ROAD IS TO THE WEST. IT WAS ON ONE OF THE ROUTES I HAD FIGURED OUT AS AN ESCAPE ROUTE.

STRIKING WEST, HE CAME TO THE ROAD AND HAD MOVED PARALLEL TO IT FOR TWO MILES WHEN HE HEARD THE CLANG AND CLATTER OF A MACHINE-SHOP CAUTIOUSLY, HE STOLE FORWARD TO INVESTIGATE...
AN ARMOURED VEHICLE REPAIR DEPOT, BY THE LOOK OF IT. ONE OF THOSE ARMOURED CARS WOULD BE JUST THE JOB FOR A RESCUE ATTEMPT.

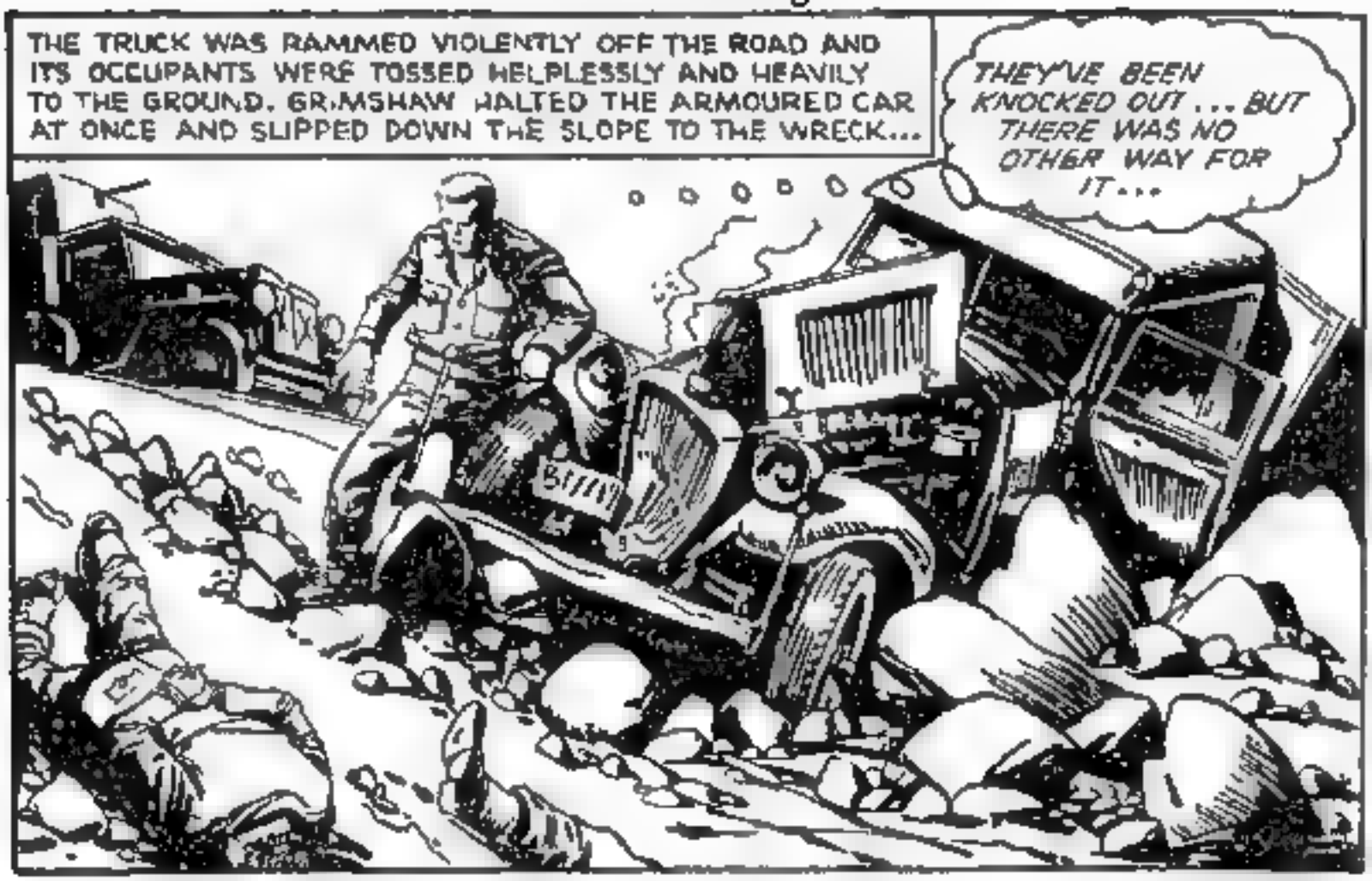
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EVERY SPOT OF COVER, GRIMSHAW CREPT TOWARDS AN ARMOURED CAR AT THE END OF THE LINE.
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE A CHANCE THAT THE CAR IS TANKED UP AND READY TO ROLL!

A TANK WAS CLATTERING OUT OF THE SHED AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE DIN, GRIMSHAW CLIMBED INTO THE ARMOURED CAR AND STARTED IT UP. ONLY AFTER HE HAD DRIVEN IT ALONG THE REAR OF THE PARKED VEHICLES AND WAS EMERGING ON TO THE ROAD DID ANYONE NOTICE HIM...
TEUFEL! WHAT IS HAPPENING? HEY, STOP...

IN THE MEANTIME, RUSTY AND BUTCH WERE BEING DRIVEN TO THEIR PLACE OF EXECUTION. ONE FAVOUR HAD BEEN GRANTED THEM... THEY WERE TO GO TO THEIR DEATHS IN UNIFORM, AND ILL-FITTING BATTLEDRESS HAD BEEN FOUND FOR THEM.
CHIN UP, PAL.
IT'S A ROTTEN WAY TO GET THE CHOP, BUTCH!


THE DISTANT RUMBLE OF GUNFIRE MADE AN OMINOUS BACKGROUND NOISE AS THE TRUCK GROUND IN LOW GEAR UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS. ON ONE PARTICULARLY STEEP SECTION OF ROAD, AN ARMOURED CAR EMERGED INTO VIEW FROM A SMALL CLEARING ...

THE DRIVER OF THE TRUCK THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT UNTIL THE ARMOURED CAR SUDDENLY SWERVED TOWARDS HIM WITH A YELL OF ALARM, HE FRANTICALLY SWUNG THE WHEEL... BUT IN VAIN...
HIMMEL!


THE TRUCK WAS RAMMED VIOLENTLY OFF THE ROAD AND ITS OCCUPANTS WERE TOSSED HELPLESSLY AND HEAVILY TO THE GROUND. GRIMSHAW HALTED THE ARMOURED CAR AT ONCE AND SLIPPED DOWN THE SLOPE TO THE WRECK...
THEY'VE BEEN KNOCKED OUT ... BUT THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY FOR IT...

HE WASTED NO TIME IN CARRYING THE STUNNED PRIVATES TO THE ARMOURED CAR ...

THEN HE SET OFF IN AN EFFORT TO PUT AS MUCH DISTANCE AS POSSIBLE BETWEEN THE CAR AND THE SCENE OF THE RESCUE. RATHER THAN AROUSE ENEMY SUSPICIONS HE TURNED ON TO A SIDE ROAD AS A GERMAN CONVOY CAME INTO VIEW.

AS SOON AS I GET OUT OF SIGHT I'LL TEND TO THESE LADS. THEY'LL PROBABLY BE COMING ROUND SOON...

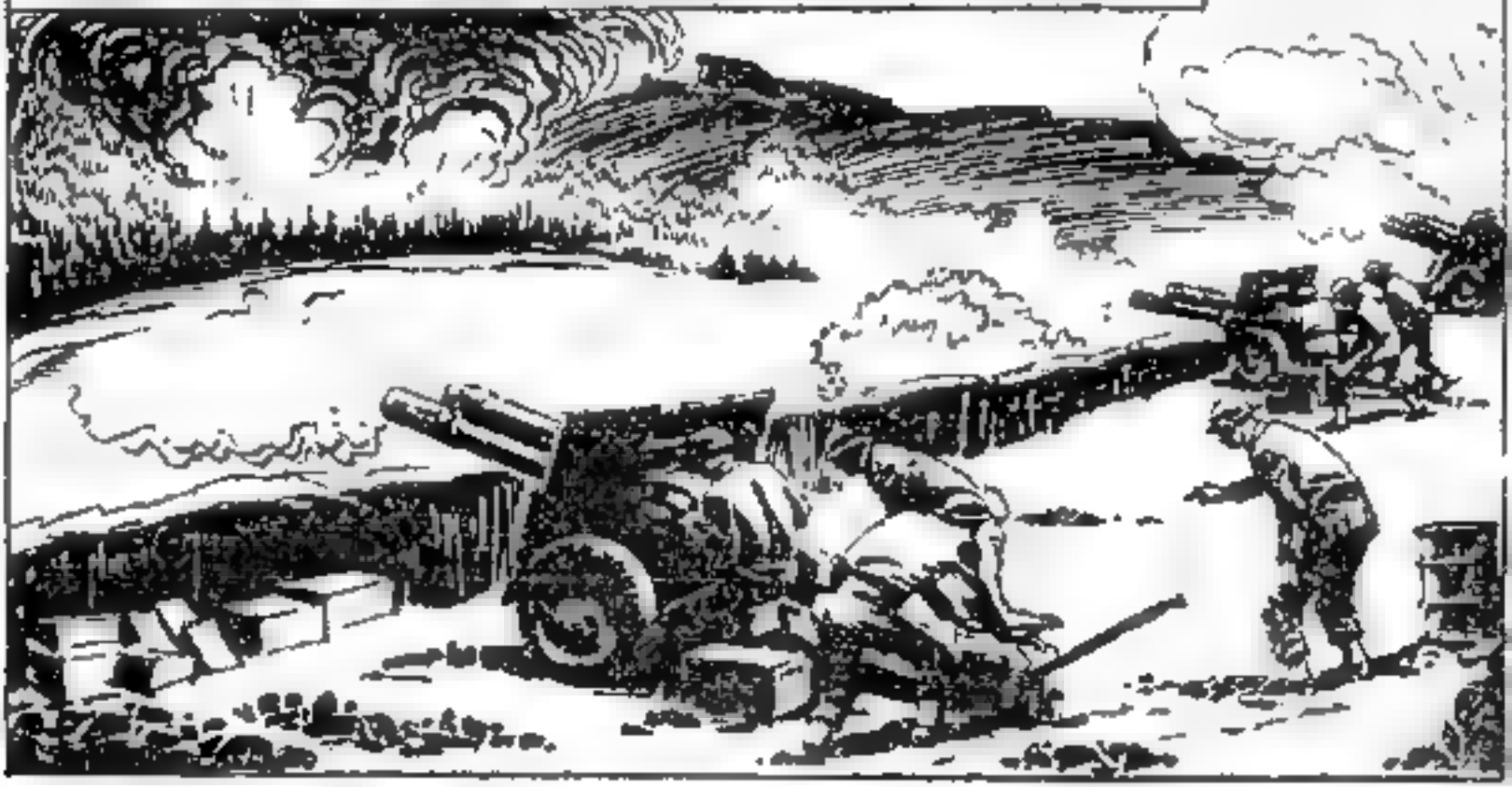
A MILE FARTHER ON, HE TURNED THE CAR AMONGST SOME TREES, LIFTED HIS TWO PASSENGERS OUT AND UNTIED THEIR WRISTS.

SORRY I HAD TO TREAT YOU SO ROUGH, LADS... BUT IT WAS THAT OR THE FIRING SQUAD!

DON'T APOLOGISE, CORPORAL... WE'D RATHER HAVE A FEW BRUISES THAN A BULLET IN THE OLD TICKER! WE THOUGHT IT WAS YOU WHO TOLD THE GERMANS WHERE WE WERE GOING TO HIDE WHEN WE ESCAPED

ME? NO, I WAS JUST FRATERNISING WITH THE JERRIES AS PART OF AN ESCAPE PLAN. IT WASN'T NECESSARY, THOUGH. THERE WAS A MASS BREAK-OUT FROM THE CAMP AND AS WE HAD BEEN TOLD WHERE YOU WERE TO BE SHOT, GRABBED AN ARMOURED CAR AND LAY IN WAIT ON THE ROAD.

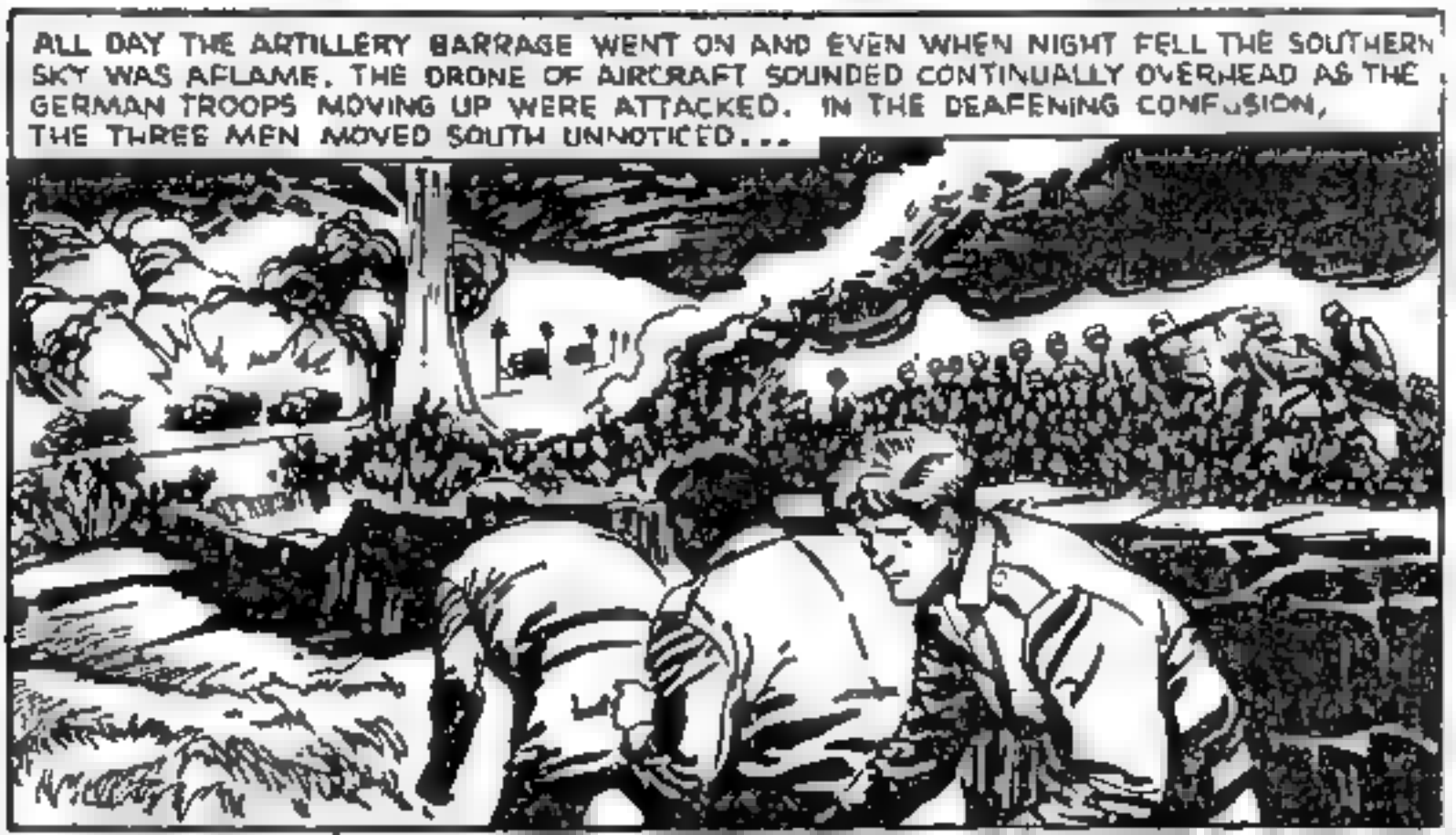
THE MUTED THUNDER OF GUNS IN THE SOUTH HAD GROWN TO A TREMENDOUS CANNONADE THE GERMANS THROWN BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL POSITIONS NORTH OF THE TAGLIONE RIDGE, WERE BEING SOFTENED UP BY THE MASSED ARTILLERY OF THE ALLIED ARMIES, WHO WERE POISED READY TO SWEEP FORWARD...



THE DIN OF THAT EARTH-RENDING BARRAGE GAVE THE THREE ESCAPEES FRESH HEART THEY HAD DISCARDED THE ARMOURED CAR AND WERE HEADING DOGGEDLY SOUTHWARDS ..

BUT ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS WERE ON THE MOVE AND IT BECAME INCREASINGLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE BRITISHERS TO AVOID BEING SIGHTED BY THE GERMANS

AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY, THE FUGITIVES WENT TO GROUND.
LOOK, FELLERS. IT'S TOO RISKY TO MOVE BY DAY. WE'D BETTER HIDE UP DURING DAYLIGHT, AND ONLY MOVE AFTER DARK.
OKAY, CORP


ALL DAY THE ARTILLERY BARRAGE WENT ON AND EVEN WHEN NIGHT FELL THE SOUTHERN SKY WAS AFLAME. THE DRONE OF AIRCRAFT SOUNDED CONTINUALLY OVERHEAD AS THE GERMAN TROOPS MOVING UP WERE ATTACKED. IN THE DEAFENING CONFUSION, THE THREE MEN MOVED SOUTH UNNOTICED...

AT GERMAN REAR ECHELON HEADQUARTERS, PRIVATE SCRUTTON, THE PRISONER WHO HAD REFUSED TO ESCAPE WAS VOLUNTEERING INFORMATION TO THE ENEMY INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS BEFORE WHOM HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT...
I KNOW WHAT UNITS ARE IN THE LINE, SIR, AND WHERE MANY OF OUR DUMPS AND AMMUNITION DEPOTS ARE. I CAN GIVE YOU A LOT OF VALUABLE HELP IF YOU WILL ONLY GIVE ME A CHANCE!
SO! WE WILL SEE.

IT WAS TOO GOOD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GERMANS TO REFUSE...
FORWARD H.Q.? WE HAVE A PRISONER HERE... AN ENGLISH DESERTER! I AM SURE YOUR CORPS INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS WILL BE INTERESTED IN HIM. JAWOHL, WE WILL SEND HIM!

SO IT CAME ABOUT THAT SOON AFTER DAWN, GRIMSHAW, RUSTY AND BUTCH SAW TWO STAFF CARS TURN INTO A LANE THAT LED INTO THE HEART OF THE CYPRESS GROVE WHERE THEY WERE HIDING.
STAFF CARS! THERE MUST BE A GERMAN H.Q. ABOUT HERE!
LET'S GET CLOSER AND HAVE A DEKKO.

WITHIN A FEW MINUTES THEY WERE LOOKING AT A SMALL VILLA AND WERE IN TIME TO SEE THE CARS UNLOAD THEIR OCCUPANTS. THEY STARED IN ASTONISHMENT...

LOOK! IT'S THAT DESERTER - SCRUTTON!

THE RAT MUST BE HELPING THE JERRIES! HE'S NOT EVEN UNDER GUARD

THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULD DO EXCEPT NOTE THE POSITION OF THE HEADQUARTERS. THE NOISE OF BATTLE WAS ALWAYS GETTING NEARER AND WHEN THEY MOVED FORWARD AFTER NIGHTFALL, THEY KNEW THEY WOULD SOON BE IN THE BATTLE AREA...

THIS MUST BE THE LAST LAP .. WE'LL HAVE TO BE EXTRA CAREFUL!

IN HIS HEADQUARTERS, THE GERMAN GENERAL SCHAEFFER WAS CLOSELY QUESTIONING THE DESERTER, SCRUTTON. THROUGH AN INTERPRETER THE WHOLE ALLIED PLAN OF BATTLE WAS IN JEOPARDY.

.. THIS MAN SAYS THAT HE IS SURE THE CANADIAN ARMORED DIVISION WAS BROUGHT TO THE CAMPAGNA SECTOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS AGO, HERR GENERAL.

ACH, SO! THAT IS INTERESTING.. WHAT ELSE?

THE THREE EX-PRISONERS WERE NOW RUNNING THE GAUNTLET OF FIRE FROM THEIR OWN GUNS AS THEY SLIPPED THROUGH THE ENEMY LINES ..

THERE WERE GAPS BETWEEN THE ENEMY RESERVE FORMATIONS AND IT WAS THROUGH THESE GAPS THAT THE PO F CORPORAL AND THE TWO PRIVATES FOUND THEIR WAY BUT EVERY MOVEMENT WAS FRAUGHT WITH PER..

DAWN FOUND THEM ON THE EDGE OF A CORNFIELD, WITH MACHINE-GUN BULLETS WHINING THROUGH THE AIR ABOUT THEM. THE CRACKLE OF SMALL-ARMS FIRE REPLACED THE HEAVY GUNFIRE OF THE LAST HOURS AS GERMAN INFANTRY COUNTER-ATTACKED A PROMINENT HILLOCK IN THE FACE OF MURDEROUS FIRE.
IT MUST BE THE FARTHEST POINT OUR BLOKES HAVE REACHED... AND THEY'RE HAV NG A HOT TIME, BY THE LOOKS OF IT!
WHAT ABOUT US JOINING IN? IF WE COULD START SHOOTING INTO JERRY FROM THE REAR, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE A BIT.

THE SAME THOUGHT WAS IN RUSTY AND BUTCH'S MINDS AND WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, THE THREE BRITISHERS DARTED FROM COVER AND SNATCHED UP WEAPONS FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.

FROM THE COVER OF A COPSE, THEY POURED A WITHERING FIRE INTO THE GERMANS ATTACKING THE HILLOCK.
THE SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED STORM OF BULLETS SPREAD CONFUSION AMONGST THE ENEMY.

THE ASSAULT WAVERED AND A TIMELY SALVO OF MORTAR BOMBS COMPLETED THE ROUT. THE GERMANS WHO HAD SURVIVED BEAT A RETREAT... AND THERE WAS NOTHING TO STOP THE FUGITIVES FROM REACHING THEIR OWN LINES...
COME ON... THIS IS OUR CHANCE! WE'RE NEARLY HOME!

THE BRITISH ON THE HILL HELD THEIR FIRE AT THE SIGHT OF THE APPROACHING MEN IN BATTLEDRESS. THEY FOUND A SCENE OF DEVASTATION.

THE HILL WAS BEING USED AS AN ARTILLERY OBSERVATION POST AND WAS A CRUCIAL POINT IN THAT SECTOR OF THE FRONT.

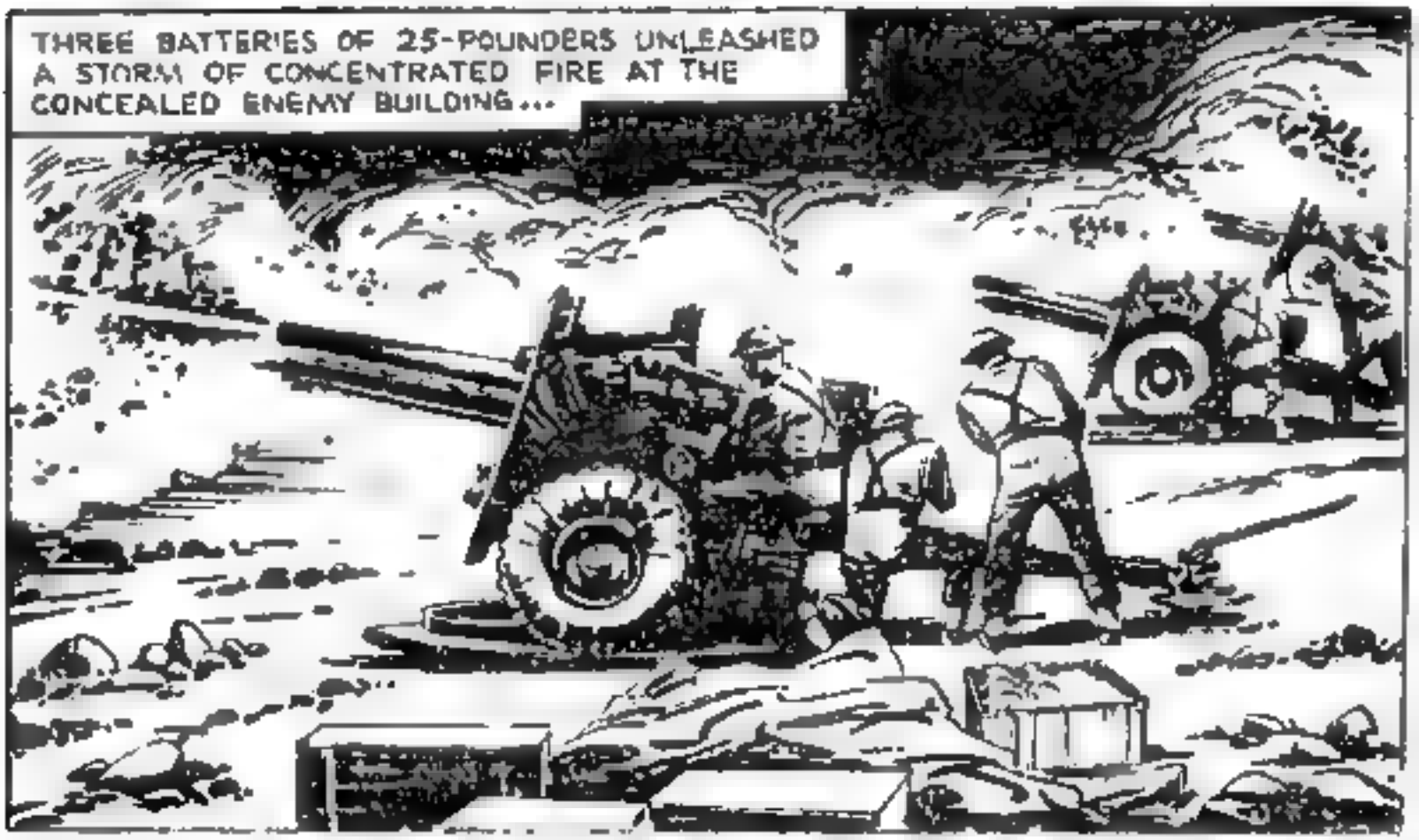
RUSTY AND BUTCH DIVED INTO THE NEAREST FOX-HOLES AS THE ENEMY RESUMED THEIR ATTACK AND GRIMSHAW FLUNG HIMSELF DOWN BY THE WOUNDED OFFICER WHO SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION.

TOO WEAK TO PHONE BACK TARGETS... TO THE BATTERY. CAN YOU... PHONE FOR ME?

YES, SIR!

GRIMSHAW TOLD THE GUNNER OFFICER OF THE GERMAN HEADQUARTERS HIDDEN IN THE WOOD.
WE'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT VILLA WAS AN H.Q., SIR! THE GUNS SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIPE IT OUT!
SHOW... SHOW ME WHERE IT IS.. ON THAT MAP AND I'LL TELL YOU... WHAT DATA TO GIVE... TO ARTILLERY CONTROL...

THE GUNNER OFFICER ON THE POINT OF COLLAPSE SUMMONED ENOUGH STRENGTH TO WHISPER THE VITAL INSTRUCTIONS WHICH GRIMSHAW PASSED ON...
GERMAN HEADQUARTERS. PRIORITY TARGET, REPEAT... PRIORITY TARGET ALL AVAILABLE GUNS... MAP THREE, SECTOR SEVEN GRID NINETEEN, ONE-O-FIVE. B MINUS NINE ONE...


THREE BATTERIES OF 25-POUNDERS UNLEASHED A STORM OF CONCENTRATED FIRE AT THE CONCEALED ENEMY BUILDING...

THE SMALL WOOD THAT HID GENERAL SCHAEFFER'S HEADQUARTERS WAS SUDDENLY DELUGED IN A SHATTERING CATARACT OF SHELLFIRE...

THE GENERAL, HIS ENTIRE STAFF, AND THE RENEGADE BRITISH DESERTER, SCRUTTON, WERE ALL OBLITERATED IN THAT ROARING INFERNO...

FOR THE NEXT FEW VITAL HOURS, ALL CENTRAL DIRECTION OF THE GERMAN DEFENCE WAS LOST. WITHOUT LEADERSHIP, THE VARIOUS UNITS FOUGHT DESPERATELY BUT WITHOUT COHESION AND THE ALLIED ARMOUR BROKE THROUGH...

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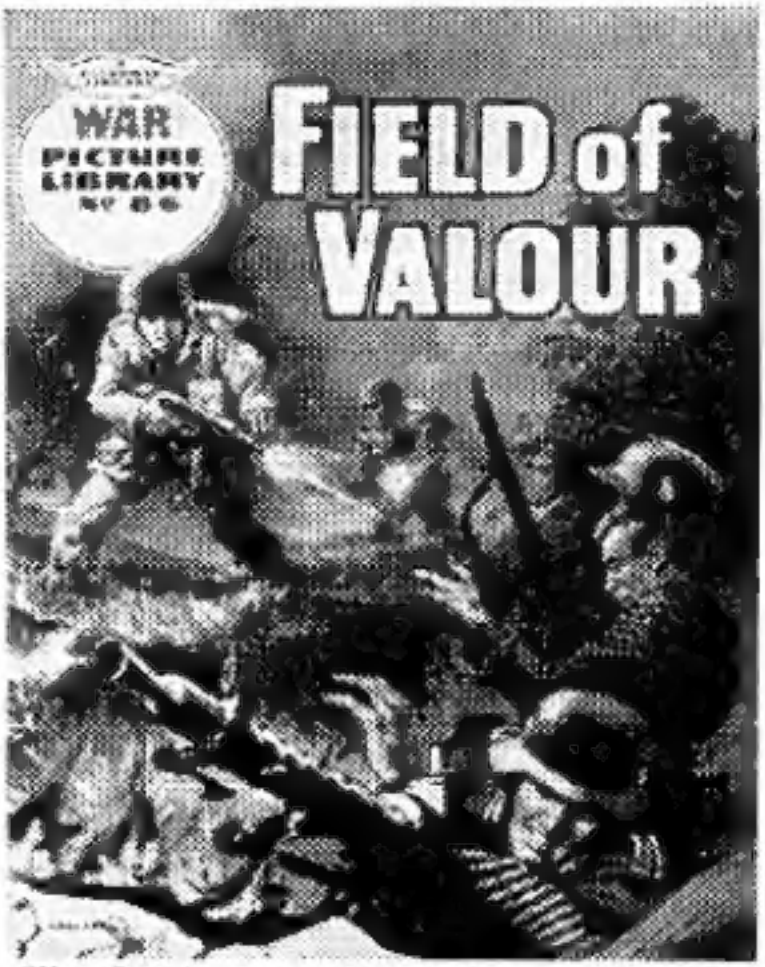

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